

CHAPTER IX

FALL OF THE ALAMO — CREATION OF THE REPUBLIC

WHILE the government and military organization of Texas had fallen into a condition of confusion and anarchy, Santa Anna had been consolidating the power in Mexico. The new Constitution abolished the state legislatures, and preserved only the forms of a federal government in a department council and governors of provinces appointed by the President. The President was the supreme authority and absolute dictator in all but the name. The republican party was completely cowed, and the majority of the people of Mexico accepted the destruction of their liberties without a murmur, and even apparently with approval. Having completed this work, Santa Anna turned his attention to the subjugation of Texas, where alone his authority was resisted. He commenced the concentration of troops at San Luis Potosi early in December, and dispatched the first brigade under the command of General Sesma for the relief of General Cos, then besieged in San Antonio. Cos's retreating forces were met at the Rio Grande, and Sesma halted there to await the arrival of the remainder of the army. The other two bri-

gades, with the cavalry and artillery, were concentrated at Saltillo, and Santa Anna took the command in person. General Vincente Filisola, an Italian, who had been for some time in the service of Mexico, and was the empresario of a grant of land in Texas, was appointed second in command. General Castillon commanded the artillery, and General Audrade the cavalry. Generals Tolsa and Gaona commanded the second and third brigades. The troops were the best in the Mexican army, veterans of the civil war, and disciplined so far as the system of service was capable of doing it. From Saltillo Santa Anna dispatched General Urrea with 200 cavalry to Matamoras, with instructions to take command of the troops there, and move north to attack Refugio and Goliad. Early in February, Santa Anna reached Monova with his army, consisting of about 4000 men, and set out with an escort of fifty cavalry to join General Cos and General Sesma on the Rio Grande. When the army was consolidated with the troops under Cos and Sesma it numbered between 6000 and 7000 men. The march of the Mexican army from Monova to San Antonio, a distance of nearly 600 miles, was a most painful and trying one. The greater portion of the country was almost a desert, without inhabitants, except a few scattered villages, a barren plain without shelter and almost without water. It was the dead of winter, and the snow and sleet and piercing "northers" swept down upon the thinly clad and unacclimated troops. In accord-

ance with the Mexican custom, a great crowd of women, wives of the soldiers, and camp followers accompanied the march, and added to the distress and difficulty. In spite of rapacious demands upon the inhabitants of the villages, food fell short, and the army was put on half rations. The animals died in great numbers, and it was with extreme difficulty that the cannons and wagons were dragged along. But the imperious energy of Santa Anna whipped the army along, and the advance guard appeared before San Antonio on February 22.

The garrison was taken by surprise. No scouting parties had been sent out, and so careless were the Texans that they had been attending a fandango two nights before, while Santa Anna was encamped on the Medina. He was informed of the condition of the garrison, and attempted to move forward for the surprise of the place during the night. But the ammunition wagons were on the west side of the river, the stream was swollen, and a heavy norther was blowing, so that he gave up his design. The first knowledge of the approach of the Mexican army was from the sentinels on the roof of the church. Their alarm was disbelieved at first, and two horsemen were sent out to reconnoitre. They came upon the enemy at Prospect Hill, an eminence a short distance west of the town, and were pursued by the Mexicans, one of them being thrown from his horse and breaking his arm. The garrison hastily retreated across the river to the Alamo, Lieutenant A. M. Dickenson catching

up his wife and child on his horse at the door of a Mexican house. As the garrison crossed the plain they swept up with them thirty or forty beef cattle, and drove them into the plaza of the fortress. When Santa Anna reached San Antonio he sent a flag with a demand for the immediate surrender of the Mission. Travis dispatched Major Morris and Captain Marten to meet the flag, and on the return of his messengers gave his answer by an emphatic "no" from a cannon shot. The blood-red flag of "no quarter" was hoisted on the tower of the church of San Fernando, and the siege was begun by a cannonade from the Mexican guns.

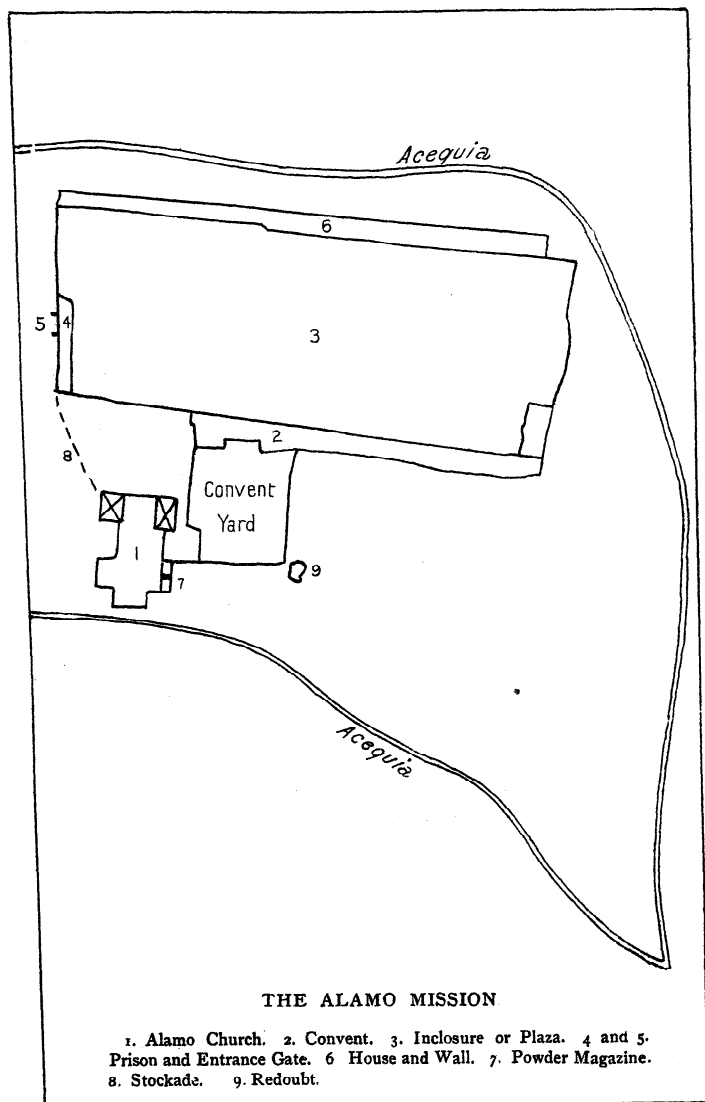
The Mission of the Alamo, which signifies the cottonwood-tree, was established, where it then stood, in 1722. It had been founded by the Franciscan friars from the college at Queretaro in 1710, in the valley of the Rio Grande, and after several removals on account of the scarcity of water and the attacks of the Indians, it had been finally located at San Antonio. The buildings of the Mission consisted of a church in the usual form of a cross, with walls of hewn stone, five feet thick, and twenty-two and a half feet high. The church faced to the westward, toward the river and the town. The central portion of the church was roofless at the time of the siege; but arched rooms on each side of the entrance and the sacristy, which was used as a powder magazine, were strongly covered with a roof of masonry. The windows were high up from the floor, and close and

narrow, to protect the congregation from the flights of Indian arrows. The front was decorated with battered carvings and stone images, and the entrance was barred by heavy oaken doors. Adjoining the church on the left and touching the wing of the cross formed by its walls was the convent yard, an inclosure about a hundred feet square, with walls sixteen feet high and three and a half feet thick, strengthened on the inside with an embankment of earth to half their height. At the farther or southeastern corner of the convent yard was a sally port, defended by a small redoubt. The convent and hospital building, of adobe bricks, two stories in height and eighteen feet in width, extended along the west side of the yard to the distance of 191 feet. It contained one long room in the hospital, and a number of small rooms and cells. The main plaza extended in front of the church and convent in the form of a parallelogram, with its side toward the river, and covered between two and three acres. It was inclosed by a wall eight feet high and thirty-three inches thick. On the southern end of the plaza were buildings used as a prison and barracks, and a heavy stockade of cedar logs had been planted from this corner of the plaza, which extended some twenty yards beyond the line of the church, diagonally to the corner of the church, and protected the entrance. Other buildings and houses occupied places on the inside of the wall of the plaza, but were not of much strength or consequence. The Mission was entirely isolated

from the town, which was wholly on the west bank of the river, with the exception of a few miserable jacals on the eastern bank. There was a plentiful supply of water from the acequias, one on the south connecting with a ditch through the plaza, and the other skirting with its shallow, greenish stream the east end of the church.

To defend this extensive place Travis had fourteen pieces of artillery. These were mounted on the walls of the church fronting north, south, and east; two were planted at the stockade, and two at the main entrance to the plaza; four defended the redoubt at the entrance to the convent yard, and others were placed at various points along the walls. There were no redoubts or bastions, except the single outwork in front of the sally port to the convent yard. It was evidently impossible to defend so wide a space with so small a garrison, and the defense was mainly concentrated about the church and convent. Travis had been as careless about his supply of provisions as about his guard. Only three bushels of corn were at first found in the Alamo, but some eighty or ninety bushels were afterward discovered in one of the houses.

The garrison, when it entered the Alamo, consisted of 145 men. The garrison comprised the men who had remained after the departure of the expedition under Grant, and such volunteers as had since straggled in. They had no training in arms, except in the use of the rifle, which was a necessity of their



daily existence. They were without definite military organization, and were only held together by a common heroic purpose. The commander, Lieutenant-Colonel William Barrett Travis, was a native of North Carolina, twenty-eight years of age, and by profession a lawyer. He had taken a prominent part in the early troubles with the Mexican authorities, and was on the proscribed list of Santa Anna. In appearance he was six feet in height, erect and manly in figure, with blue eyes, reddish hair, and round face. The second in command was Colonel James Bowie, famous all over the West as the inventor of the terrible knife which bore his name. He was a native of Georgia, but removed to Chatahoula parish in Louisiana. While there he fought a desperate duel with one Norris Wright on a sand bar in the Mississippi. Bowie was shot down, and Wright bent down to dispatch him, when Bowie drew his knife and stabbed him to the heart. Bowie accompanied Long's filibuster expedition to Texas, and afterward remained in the territory, engaged in smuggling African slaves from Galveston and in various adventures. He had a prolonged and desperate fight with the Comanches, while at the head of a party in search of the old San Saba gold mines, and his hardihood and courage had become proverbial. He was a large, fair man, and, like many of the early Texans, occasionally worked off the fervor of his animal spirits by tremendous debauches of drinking. Another very notable figure among the defend-

ers of the Alamo was David Crockett. Crockett was a native of Tennessee, where he was born August 17, 1776. He had spent his life in the woods, and was a mighty deer and bear hunter. He had also served as a soldier in the war of 1812. Without education, he had a shrewd and taking humor, and a great gift for popularity among the rude frontier population. He was a sort of king at the shooting matches and other rustic gatherings, and became a frontier politician. He was elected to the state legislature, and afterward for two terms as a Representative in Congress, where he figured as a sort of eccentric curiosity. He was shrewd enough to exploit his characteristics as a backwoodsman, and was exhibited as a lion in Washington society. He visited the North on a popular tour, and published several books detailing his life and adventures, and a political burlesque biography of Martin Van Buren, written in a quaint and forcible style.¹ He was so impolitic as to set himself in opposition to the authority of President Jackson, and was defeated in his attempt to secure a third election to Congress. He resolved to try and renew his fortunes in Texas, and came to the territory in 1836. He arrived with twelve Tennesseans at San Antonio about three weeks before the opening of the siege of the Alamo. In person he was tall and spare, with black hair and angular features expressive of his shrewd humor. He dressed in buck-

¹ The book purporting to be written by Crockett, and describing his adventures in Texas, is obviously a fabrication.

skin, carried his favorite long rifle "Betsy," and was conspicuous by his coonskin cap. Another man of distinction among the defenders of the Alamo was Colonel J. B. Bonham, of South Carolina, who had responded to the call of Texas for volunteers, and arrived in San Antonio shortly before the commencement of the siege.

Santa Anna commenced his operations by erecting batteries for his fieldpieces, but did not make a complete investment of the Mission. The defenders occasionally replied with their cannon, but in the main depended upon their rifles, which seldom missed their mark. General Castrillon, under orders from Santa Anna, attempted to build a bridge across the river from the timbers of the houses. The party was within the reach of the rifles of the Texans, and in a few minutes thirty were killed. The survivors were withdrawn.

Travis sent the following appeal for assistance to the government, which has a stirring and heroic ring:—

TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS AND ALL AMERICANS IN
THE WORLD.

COMMANDANCY OF THE ALAMO,
BEXAR, *February 24, 1836.*

FELLOW-CITIZENS AND COMPATRIOTS, — I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continued bombardment for twenty-four hours, and have not lost a man.

The enemy have demanded a surrender at discretion; otherwise the garrison is to be put to the sword if the place is taken. I have answered the summons with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. *I shall never surrender or retreat.* Then I call on you in the name of liberty, of patriotism, and of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy are receiving reinforcements daily, and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. Though this call may be neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible, and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. Victory or death!

W. BARRETT TRAVIS,

Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding.

P. S. The Lord is on our side. When the army appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn. We have since found in deserted houses eighty or ninety bushels, and got into the walls twenty or thirty beeves.¹

¹ The letter, in a firm and bold handwriting, now among the state archives at Austin, has the following indorsements on the back by the couriers, who forwarded it: —

“Since the above was written I heard a very heavy cannonade during the whole day. Think there must have been an attack on the Alamo. We were short of ammunition when I left. Hurry all the men you can forth. When I left there were but 150 men determined to do or die. To-morrow I leave for Bexar with what men I can. Almonte is there. The troops are commanded by General Sesma.

ALBERT MARTIN.”

Colonel Bonham was also dispatched with a message to Colonel Fannin at Goliad asking him to come to the assistance of the garrison.

On the 25th Santa Anna endeavored to erect a battery 300 yards south of the main entrance to the plaza, and a sharp skirmish took place in which eight Mexicans were killed. The enemy succeeded in erecting the battery during the night, and also one near the old powder house to the southeast. The same night the Mexican cavalry were stationed on the road leading to the east. On the 26th there was a skirmish between the Texans and the Mexican cavalry on the eastern road, and during the night a party sallied out and burnt the jacals on the east side of the river, which had afforded shelter to the enemy. Santa Anna's troops continued to arrive, and the investment of the Mission was made more complete. But it was not close enough to prevent the entrance of a party of thirty-two men from Gonzales, under Captain J. W. Smith, who stole their way through the enemy's lines, and joined the garrison on the night of March 1. On March 3, Colonel Bonham returned with a message from Colonel Fannin that he would march at once for the relief of the garrison. Fannin started on the 28th of February with 300 men and four pieces of artillery. His ammunition

"I hope that every one will Rendevs at Gonzales as soon Possible as the Brave soldiers are suffering; don not forget the powder is very scarce and should not be delad one moment.

L. SMITHER."

wagon broke down, and he had not oxen enough to get his cannon across the river. The troops had no provisions except some rice and a little dried beef, and, after a council with his officers, Fannin decided to return to Goliad. On the 3d of March, Travis sent off his last message to the government:—

“I am still here in fine spirits and well-to-do. With 145 men, I have held the place against a force variously estimated from between 1500 to 6000, and I shall continue to hold it until I get relief from my countrymen, or I will perish in its defense. We have had a shower of bombs and cannon balls continually falling among us the whole time; yet none of us have fallen. We have been miraculously preserved. . . . Again, I feel confident that the determined spirit and desperate courage heretofore exhibited by my men will not fail them in the last struggle; and although they may be sacrificed to the vengeance of a Gothic enemy, the victory will cost that enemy so dear that it will be worse than a defeat. . . . A blood-red flag waves from the church of Bexar and in the camp above us, in token that the war is one of vengeance against rebels. . . . These threats have had no influence upon my men but to make all fight with desperation and with that high-souled courage which characterize the patriot who is willing to die in defense of his country; liberty and his own honor; God and Texas; victory or death!”

The enemy had effected but little by their cannonade, their guns being only fieldpieces of light calibre.

The garrison, however, was worn down by constant vigilance night and day, and frequent alarms in expectation of an attack.

After Santa Anna's troops had all arrived on March 2, they were given three days in which to rest after their weary march. On the 5th, Santa Anna held a council of war on the question of an immediate assault of the Alamo. A portion of the officers were in favor of awaiting the arrival of siege artillery, but Santa Anna determined on an assault the next day. On the morning of the 6th of March, Sunday, the forces for the assault were formed at four o'clock. The troops numbered 2500, and were divided into four columns. The first was under the command of General Cos, the second under Colonel Duque, the third under Colonel Romero, and the fourth under Colonel Morales. The columns were supplied with scaling ladders, crowbars, and axes. The cavalry were drawn around the fort to prevent any attempt at escape. In the gray light of the morning the bugle sounded, and the bands struck up the Spanish air of Deguelo (Cut-throat), the signal of no quarter. Santa Anna witnessed the attack from the battery in front of the plaza. The troops dashed forward at a run, and were received with a deadly fire from the artillery and rifles. The column attacking the northern wall recoiled, and Colonel Duque was desperately wounded. The attacks on the eastern and western walls also failed, and the columns swarmed around to the north side. Here in a dense mass they were

driven forward by the blows and shouts of their officers. Once more they recoiled before the fire, but at the third trial they scaled the wall, "tumbling over it like sheep." They carried the redoubt at the sally port, and swarmed into the convent yard, forcing the Texans into the convent and hospital. The captured cannon were turned against the flimsy adobe walls, and the Mexicans stormed the breaches. The Texans fought from room to room, using their clubbed rifles and bowie knives so long as they had life left to strike. Colonel Travis and Colonel Bonham fell here. The Mexicans fired a howitzer loaded with grape twice into the long room of the hospital. Fifteen Texans were found dead in the room, and forty-two Mexicans on the outside. The last struggle took place in the church. The column attacking on the south side carried the stockade and poured into the church. Major T. C. Evans, the commander of the artillery, started for the magazine to blow up the building, as the defenders had agreed should be done at the last extremity, but was struck down by a musket shot as he was entering the door. Crockett was killed near the entrance, with his clubbed rifle in his hand. Bowie was lying, disabled by a fall from a platform, on a cot in the arched room to the left of the entrance. He was shot through the door as he lay on his bed firing his pistols. Mrs. Dickenson, wife of Lieutenant Dickenson, and her infant child had been placed in the opposite room for safety. A wounded man by the name of Walters fled into the

room. He was pursued by the Mexicans, who shot him, and then raised his body on their bayonets, "as a farmer does a bundle of fodder," until the blood ran down upon them. Mrs. Dickenson was protected by the interposition of Colonel Almonte. Mrs. Alsbury, a Mexican woman, niece and adopted daughter of the Vice-Governor Veramendi, and her little sister had gone to the Alamo with their brother-in-law, Colonel Bowie, and waited upon him after his injury. When the slaughter was over they came out of their hiding-place, and were protected by a Mexican officer. They were afterward recognized by a friend among the spectators, and taken to their home in San Antonio. Mrs. Alsbury and her sister, Mrs. Dickenson and her child, a negro boy, servant of Colonel Travis, and a Mexican woman were the only persons spared by the Mexicans.

At nine o'clock the Alamo had fallen. Santa Anna left the shelter of the battery and came upon the scene. Five persons, who had hid themselves, were brought before him. General Castrillon interceded for their lives, but Santa Anna turned his back upon him with a reprimand for his weakness, and the Mexican soldiers dispatched them with their bayonets.

After the slaughter the bodies of the dead Texans were collected by the order of Santa Anna, and piled together with alternate layers of wood. The mass was then heaped with dry brush and burned. The ashes and bones were left to the dogs and the vul-

tures. A year later, what remained were placed in a coffin by order of Colonel John Seguin, mayor of San Antonio, and buried with military honors. The number of the dead cannot be known with absolute accuracy. It was probably in the neighborhood of 180, of whom the names of 166 are known. Several couriers had been sent out during the siege, all of whom did not return. Captain J. W. Smith, of the Gonzales party, escaped with Travis's message of March 3, and it is possible that there were other messengers, who were cut off by the Mexican cavalry. All the garrison were Americans except three Mexicans who had joined them from the town.

The loss of the Mexicans in the assault has never been ascertained. Santa Anna, in his official report, said that there were only 70 killed and 300 wounded. But this was obviously an outrageous lie, as he also said that the Texans numbered 400, and that the attacking party consisted of only 1400. Various estimates give the loss of the Mexicans at between 300 and 500 killed, or who afterward died of their wounds. Dr. Bernard, who was taken prisoner at Goliad, and sent to attend the sick at San Antonio, said that the Mexican surgeons told him that over 400 wounded soldiers were brought into the hospitals after the assault. Sergeant Bercero, one of the attacking party, in giving his reminiscence of the assault, said: "There was an order to gather our dead and wounded. It was a painful sight. Our lifeless soldiers covered the ground surrounding the Alamo

They were heaped inside the fortress. Blood and brains covered the earth and floor, and were spattered on the walls. The killed were generally struck on the head. The wounds were generally in the neck or shoulders, seldom below that."

The defense of the Alamo was a mistake in strategic warfare. It was impossible that the small garrison could successfully defend the post against the overwhelming force of Santa Anna's army. The defenders undoubtedly knew it. It is said that Travis drew them together, and addressed them in terms that could have left no doubt in their minds; but whether that was so or not, they were aware that there was very little chance of their receiving succor from the Texan army. They could have made their escape, even after the investment of the Alamo, as easily as the party from Gonzales made their way into the fort. They could have found refuge in the timber of the streams, and with their skill in woodcraft have made their way safely south to the forces under Fannin at Goliad, or east to the settlements of the colonists. Their determination to remain was the impulse of their invincible courage, the strong vigor of their cool and desperate natures. They were ready to die in their tracks sooner than give way before an enemy they hated and despised, and they counted on the fight as only one of the many desperate chances of their lives. The lesson of the cost of taking the Alamo, and overwhelming its handful of defenders, would have warned Santa Anna, if he had

been less headstrong and vainglorious, that the task of subduing the Texan colonists was an impossible one. But with its capture he seemed to think that the conquest of Texas was already accomplished. He sent off bombastic dispatches to the authorities in the city of Mexico, and, after giving orders to his subordinates to complete the campaign, made preparations to return. Mrs. Dickenson was furnished with a horse, and made the bearer of a proclamation to the colonists, announcing the capture of the Alamo, and calling upon them to submit to the Mexican authority. She crossed the prairies alone, with her child in her arms, until she reached the Salado Creek, where she came upon the negro servant of Travis, who had made his escape from the Mexicans, hiding in the woods. They made their way together to Gonzales.

A change had taken place in the minds of the leading men in Texas in regard to the policy of a total separation from Mexico. It was discovered that the Liberal party in Mexico was utterly powerless, and that the people, almost without exception, were hostile to the American colonists, and wished them subdued. As early as January 7 Houston wrote to Major John Forbes, saying, "I now feel confident that no further experiment need be made to convince us that there is but one course left for Texas to pursue, and that is an unequivocal declaration of independence, and the formation of a constitution to be submitted to the people for their rejection or ratification." Austin wrote a letter from New Orleans,

which was published in the newspaper, stating that when he left the country he considered it premature to stir the question of independence, but the news from Vera Cruz and Tampico was that the Liberal party had united with Santa Anna to put down the Texans. Public opinion in the United States was strongly in favor of a declaration of independence by Texas, and he could not have obtained the loan without the belief that the Convention would take such a course. Whatever difference of opinion there might have been as to the time for such action he hoped there would be none now. The colonists were thoroughly disgusted with the quarrels of the Governor and Council, and anxious to have a new and more rigorous government. It is likely that the majority of them would have been ready at any time to throw off the Mexican authority, and separate from a country with which they had no natural affiliation, and whose government they tolerated only so long as it left them practically alone.

The General Convention called by the Council met at Washington, March 1, 1835. Fifty-eight delegates were present. Richard Ellis, of the Red River district, was elected president, and H. S. Kimble secretary. On the following day the declaration of independence was adopted. In its preamble it set forth the grievances of the people of Texas. It declared that the Federative Republic of Mexico had been changed without their consent to a consolidated military despotism, in which every interest was dis-

regarded except that of the army and priesthood; that their agents bearing petitions had been thrown into dungeons; that the Mexican government had failed to maintain the right of trial by jury; denied the right of worshiping the Almighty according to the dictates of conscience; had made piratical attacks upon the Texan commerce; commanded the colonists to deliver up their arms necessary for their defense against the savages; had invaded their territory by sea and land; and had incited the merciless savages to massacre the defenseless inhabitants of the frontiers. It concluded:—

“These and other grievances were patiently borne by the people of Texas until they reached the point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. We then took up arms in defense of the National Constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for assistance; our appeal has been made in vain; although months have elapsed, no sympathetic response has yet been heard from the interior. We are therefore forced to the melancholy conclusion that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty, and the substitution therefor of a military government; that they are unfit to be free and incapable of self-government.

“The necessity of self-preservation, therefore, now decrees our eternal political separation.

“We, therefore, the delegates, with plenary powers, of the people of Texas, in solemn Convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the neces-

sities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign, and independent Republic, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of nations."

On the 4th of March, Sam Houston was unanimously reëlected commander-in-chief with authority over all the forces, regulars and volunteers. Ordinances were adopted for the reorganization of the army, and for the enrollment of all citizens between the ages of seventeen and fifty to be subject to drafts. Increased bounties of land were offered to volunteers: 1280 acres for those already enlisted, who should serve during the war, 640 acres for six months' service, and 320 acres for three months; 960 acres were offered for the new recruits who should serve during the war.

There was great excitement over the news of the beleaguerment of the Alamo. On March, 2 Houston issued the following appeal to the people of Texas:—

CONVENTION HALL, *March 2, 1836.*

War is raging on the frontiers. Bexar is besieged by two thousand of the enemy under the command of General Sesma. Reinforcements are on their march to unite with the besieging army. By the last report

our force at Bexar was only one hundred and fifty men. The citizens of Texas must rally to the aid of our army or it will perish. Let the citizens of the East march to the combat. The enemy must be driven from our soil or desolation will accompany their march upon us. *Independence is declared.* It must be maintained. Immediate action, united with valor, can alone achieve our great work. The services of all are forthwith required in the field.

SAM HOUSTON,

Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

P. S. It is rumored that the enemy are on their march to Gonzales, and that they have entered the colonies. The fate of Bexar is unknown. The country must and shall be defended. The patriots of Texas are *appealed to in behalf of their bleeding country.*

A hundred or so of men were gathered about Washington, but there was no organization, and no attempt to march to the relief of the Alamo. On Sunday, March 6, the day of the fall of the Alamo, the letter of Colonel Travis making a last appeal for aid was handed to the president of the Convention. He hastily summoned the members together, and read it to them. There was a scene of intense feeling. Robert Potter moved that the Convention adjourn, arm, and march for the relief of the Alamo. Houston declared the resolution to be folly and treason to the people. He urged the Convention to re-

main and finish its work of organizing the government, without which the declaration of independence would be a vain fulmination. He promised that no enemy should approach them, and announced his intention to start at once for Gonzales. The Convention recovered from its excitement, and within an hour Houston was on his way to Gonzales, accompanied only by Colonel George W. Hockley, his chief of staff, and one or two others. While on his way he dispatched a letter to the Convention advising it to declare Texas a part of Louisiana under the treaty of 1803, and therefore belonging to the United States. The advice was not adopted, and it is not likely that it would have made any difference in the action of the United States, as that country had abandoned any such claim from Mexico.

The Convention continued its work, and adopted a series of ordinances for the formation of a provisional government. David G. Burnet was elected President, and Lorenzo D. Zavala Vice-President. Samuel P. Carson was appointed Secretary of State, Baily Hardiman, Secretary of the Treasury, Thomas J. Rusk, Secretary of War, Robert Potter, Secretary of the Navy, and David Thomas, Attorney-General. The government was authorized to contract for a loan of \$1,000,000, to enter into treaties with foreign nations, and to decide upon the time for the election of permanent officers. The President issued a fervent appeal for sympathy and aid to the people of the United States. On the 16th, the Constitution of the

Republic of Texas was adopted, and signed the following day. It provided for the establishment of an Executive, a Legislature to consist of two bodies, Senate and House of Representatives, and a Judiciary to be governed by the common law of England. Slavery was established, and owners were forbidden to manumit their slaves without the consent of Congress. Free negroes were forbidden to reside in the territory. The importation of slaves, except from the United States, was punishable as piracy. The head rights of settlers were fixed at one league and a labor for each head of a family, and one third of a league to each single man of seventeen years of age or upwards, but the location of grants was suspended until the men serving in the army could have an equal choice. Freedom and equality for all forms of religious belief were decreed; the rights of trial by jury and writ of habeas corpus, except in cases of treason, and the freedom of the press were established. No man was to be imprisoned for debt, and titles of nobility and monopolies were forbidden. The Constitution was signed by fifty members, three of whom were Mexicans, and the Convention adjourned on the 17th. The provisional government at once removed its headquarters to Harrisburg on the Buffalo Bayou.